



Life's Essential Spiritual Graces

Spirituality is a *heart* rather than a *head* experience. As we make our way through the forest of life, we use both *head* and *heart* to find our way and stay on course.

However, most of the instruction we receive along the way increases the *head* information. We receive only a minimal amount of information that informs the *heart*. This piece that you are now reading is a meager but deliberate attempt to augment that.

The main source of *heart* training comes from our families. There we should experience and learn about *love, forgiveness, generosity, closeness, and joy*. These are all truly spiritual graces —*heart* qualities. They operate as spinal discs located between vertebra to cushion our movements throughout life. If families do not provide these spiritual cushions, living life is far more difficult and painful.

The church, called into being by God's Holy Spirit, was designed and destined to direct and assist in this process of

spiritual *heart* development and sustainment. Many of us have found significant sustenance within the church. Sadly, many have not for a variety of reasons; some the fault of the church, some the fault of the person, and some from cultural evolution.

Alas, the church has not remained true to its original design to be a *spiritual haven* for all of God's people. It must somehow recapture that role and return to its designed purpose of nurturing the spirits of all of God's people. The basic principle in architectural design can be applied here: *form follows function*. The function of the church is to be a spiritual oasis for God's people. Everything we do should reflect that principle.

When it comes to *love, forgiveness, generosity, and closeness* and other spiritual graces that make life more livable and joyful, these spiritual graces cannot be *taught* (head), but must be *caught*—experienced (heart).

We learn them by experiencing them. In turn, we learn to share them. They become the way we do life. They cushion life against the hard knocks that occur without fail along the way.

Spiritual graces are not optional but absolutely essential for our survival and the survival of all of humanity. They are divinely designed and unequivocally mandated to get us safely through life.

